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# Guide

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ECUMENISM AND  
CONVERSION

THE PARISH—THE  
CHURCH'S INCARNATION

ONLY GOD COUNTS  
HIS CONVERTS

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## A New Patron

Exciting news growing out of the Second Vatican Council sometimes overshadows other events that certainly should not pass unnoticed. One such occurrence is of particular interest to priests and laymen dedicated to the convert apostolate. On October 27, 1963, the Italian Passionist who received John Henry Newman into the Church—Father Dominic Barberi—was beatified.

Pope Paul VI, in a penetrating Allocution on this apostle for conversions, speaks of his “mysterious, inexplicable vocation.” Early in his religious life, in his native Italy, Dominic was at prayer before an altar of our Lady. As he prayed, he suddenly became completely convinced that he would one day labor successfully for conversions in England. Humanly speaking, nothing seemed more unlikely. But Dominic never forgot, nor doubted the validity of this promise.

Newman himself tells how he chose Father Dominic “to ask of him admission into the One Fold of Christ.”

“Father Dominic was an admirable missionary,” explains Newman. “He had a great share in my conversion and in that of others. There was something holy about his very look. Whenever I saw him I was deeply moved in the strangest way. His cheerful and kindly manner together with all his holiness were already for me a holy speech. It is not surprising, therefore, that I became his convert and his penitent. He had a great love for England.”

It is to be hoped that a new biography will describe the providential chain of events that brought Father Dominic as the first Passionist to England where he founded four houses of his Congregation. He not only cherished an immovable assurance that the ancient faith would flourish again in that land. But Brian Fothergill in his recent biography of Wiseman describes Blessed Dominic as one of those “who worked themselves to death for the conversion of England.” The convert apostolate can look up to a new, attractive and powerful intercessor.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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# Ecumenism and Conversion

Albert Cardinal Meyer

*In a Lenten pastoral on Ecumenism, Cardinal Meyer, Archbishop of Chicago, addressed to his flock one of the most authoritative and comprehensive statements on the subject to come from a member of the American hierarchy. In the section of his pastoral entitled "Ecumenism and Faith," the Cardinal describes the relationship between Ecumenism and Conversion. His remarks will throw light on a subject currently debated among some American Catholics.*

In view of the growing success of the ecumenical movement, we hear the question raised: "Should we relax in our efforts to obtain converts to the Catholic Church?" Articles have appeared which present some evidence to show that with the growth of ecumenism the number of converts is declining. The question is a serious one and merits the serious studies of our best minds. I think it should be emphasized that the "contradiction" between convert-making and the fruitful ecumenical dialogue is only an apparent one.

As Catholics we believe that the Catholic Church is the one, true Church of Jesus Christ, and that no one can be saved who *knowingly* (that is, in the full knowledge that the Catholic Church is the one true Church) refuses to belong to her. This is true for the unbeliever, and this is true for every single separated Christian. Convert-making therefore, belongs to the very essence of the Church's mission, and can

never be omitted or relaxed. Again, the true notion of religious liberty includes not only a right but the correlative duty.

We explained this above when we quoted from Pope John's *Pacem in Terris*, that "every human being has the right to honor God according to the dictates of an upright conscience." When such an upright conscience, after a diligent search of the truth, has been convinced that the fullness of this truth is found in the Catholic Church there is also the obligation to join the Church. We hold, therefore, that anyone who recognizes the full economy of grace in regard to the Church must also be willing to join her.

It is true that experts specifically engaged in the ecumenical movement do not as such work for conversions to the Catholic Church. The aim of the ecumenical dialogue is, in the first place, understanding. Obviously, if discussions are to go on with the purpose of clarification and understand-



ing, this calm, objective atmosphere would be destroyed by any direct attempt on the part of any church to convert others to her communion.

Some believe that we ought to work only for corporate reunion, that is, we should work to draw the churches closer together, but we should not promote, and perhaps even discourage, individual conversions, since these would remove from the ecumenical movement the very persons who would exercise the most influence for a corporate reunion. Such a theory, however, is neither sound nor honest. In order to answer this question satisfactorily, we ought to distinguish several levels of religious discussion.

First, there is the ecumenical dialogue, whose purpose is mutual understanding of all the churches and the removal of prejudices. At this level, attempts at conversion are entirely out of place.

Secondly, there is the level of the formal negotiations for reunion among churches such as are going on now among many Protestant denominations and which may eventually go on between the Catholic Church and Orthodox or Protestant Churches. Here the problem is that of corporate reunion and no form of proselytism should interfere with the discussions which are conducted only by responsible authorities acting as representatives of their respective churches and not merely as individuals.

Finally, there is the level of the direct apostolate to individual persons. No Christian group can admit that it may abandon or suspend its duty to witness to the Gospel as it knows it "in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). Such witnessing should be free from bigotry, deceit, or fanaticism. It ought not to be an attack on other religious groups, nor should it in any way resort to pressures or irrational emotional appeals.

Rather it should present the truth as it is in its positive character, leaving the individual to respond with free conscience. We Catholics in the United States have never attempted to limit other religious groups in their teaching, and have enjoyed the same freedom for ourselves. We recognize, however, the obligation of every religious group to present its teaching in a manner which is free from every trace of slander, hate, contempt, or illegitimate pressures or inducements.

It should be clear, therefore, that it would be a great mistake for Catholics to cease to carry on the apostolate to individuals on the grounds that it hinders the ecumenical movement. It would be a mistake because the ecumenical movement itself requires an honest and full witness to the truth which has been given to every Christian. It would be a mistake for Catholics in particular, because we know that the entire revelation of Jesus Christ is preserved by Him in the Catholic Church in its infallible truth, and it is this truth that all men are seeking.

Undoubtedly our apostolate should be especially directed to those who know little of the Gospel and who are not affiliated to any Christian group, but we should also make available to Christian inquirers from any Church the opportunity to hear what the Catholic Church teaches. At the same time, we must scrupulously avoid attacking other religious groups. Let us not open old wounds, nor let us drive others away by an attitude of arrogance as if we had nothing to learn from them.

It is true that in the Catholic Church is contained the whole of Christ's teachings, but non-Catholics often teach us much by their example, and by their own deep understanding of truths which we hold in common, but to which we Catholics perhaps have paid too little attention. If we bear witness ourselves in a spirit of charity no one will be honestly offended. Let us preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all in a positive yet humble manner, giving to all the freedom to accept or reject it, even as Christ Himself did.

In short, beloved faithful of Christ, rekindle your faith by the observance of Lent and by the paschal renewal of your baptismal promises of Christ. Let this faith burn as brightly in your souls and your lives as will the paschal candle, a beacon to all who seek unity in Christ. Has not Christ said to you:

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a measure, but upon a lamp-stand, so as to give light to all in the house. Even so that they may see your good works and let your light shine before men, in order to give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).



# The Parish— The Church's Incarnation

Joseph M. Connolly

Were we to search the history of the Church to find it most expressively at worship, one of the haunting pictures we would find is that presented in the second generation of Christianity by St. Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius envisions a marvelously synchronized and harmonized service: the bishop surrounded by his priests, his ministers, his people—all achieving unity in prayer, in readings, in the breaking of the bread. He sees in this communal worship-act of the baptized, under the presidency of their ordained overseer, the concretely existing Church of Christ. The worshipping community, in a sense, makes the Church, realizes it, demonstrates it.

This unity at worship around the bishop haunts our imaginations precisely because our situation is so different. The Church we live in today is not that of a few people in a given city, or in a few cities. We are a Church of almost half a billion people, a Church which is scattered across the mountains as man is scattered through the land. Yet this present Church, as large as it is, must have some *locus*, some place where its visible unity becomes a living, dynamic reality.

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council, in their introductory chapter on Christian worship, recall this haunting vision of the Church united around its bishop. They admit that this is an impossible ideal under present sociological circumstances. But they point out that, below the level of bishop and diocese, there are other institutions within the Church which show forth its unity in a similar manner—institutions in which the community, with its ministers and its presiding person, manifests the same organic life and being. First place of honor

among these is given by the council fathers to the parish.

In the parish we find a presiding person, the priest, assisted not necessarily by "sacred ministers" but by ministers who read the Scriptures, who lead the singing and the spoken prayer, who perform the function of lector-commentator, both joined closely with the faithful, who are also active. The Church building itself is a holy place, and within it the Holy of Holies. The pastor and the men of the parish lead all the people of the parish in the worship and praise of the Father, in Spirit and in truth, through Christ the Lord.

If we are to make of parish worship what the fathers of the Council so ardently desire and what the needs of the Church demand, we must give extensive study to the nature of the parish and what it is today. We have to turn to sociologists to get the facts. Sociologically, what is the existent parish? Theologians must think seriously about the organic local Christian community. Beyond that, laymen, all of whom are members of a parish, must reflect on their experience of the parish and on their role as its members. Pastors and all priests who are in parish work need to make the same kind of appraisal.

This chapter is concerned only with offering some guidelines, some indications of where the scholars can do research and where all of us can begin our reflection. We will, of course, start with the parish

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as a worshipping community. Then we must go deeper and see the parish as Christ forming souls today. We must go out and see the parish as the leaven of Christ's law of love in the city of men. And finally we must look at the relationship that exists between the parish and the large Church, the universal Church.

Let us look at the parish at worship, not cynically nor even in appraisal of actual practice, for this is not our function here. Rather, let us, under the guidance of the popes of this century and with the help of the liturgical scholars of our time, see what parish worship actually is. And the first step is to ask, what is the parish? In all simplicity, I think the parish can be said to be the Church universal in this concrete, geographical location. The work of the Church is to be Christ teaching, saving and making men holy today. The work of the Church is to expand Christ across the centuries and across the continents. Since the parish is an integral part of the Church universal, the parish must then be Christ at work, teaching, saving and making men holy.

## Worship First

Christ's work is not a work which is limited to the sanctuary. Christ's work is an outpouring of the love and the life of God. There is no area of human activity which cannot be and should not be open to the saving, sanctifying work of Christ, and therefore to the work of his Church. And yet, Christ's work is most perfectly summed up and climaxed in the worship he renders the Father in and through and with his Body, the Church.

So, if we look at the parish as a worshipping community, we concentrate on the aspect of what happens in the Church building at Mass and at other services and "pious exercises." But we dare not overlook the fact that when the parish is gathered together under the impulse of the Spirit, it must bring the entire world of its location into the Mass. Just as the congregation, after it has been fed on the Word proclaimed, after it has been fed on the Word made Flesh made Food, is now sent to carry the Word and the work of Christ into all phases of the location.

Preparation for Mass should include an

awareness of the good and the needs of the neighborhood. Each family is very conscious, when its members come to Mass, of the needs of the family. With joy and thanksgiving, each family is aware of the graces and benefits which God in his goodness has given it. It comes to Mass to offer thanksgiving for these gifts as well as to pray for its needs. Since the parish is the Church of Christ here and now, parishioners as they gather in their worship-assembly under the impulse of the Spirit must be conscious that they bring to this celebration all of the good that God has planted in the neighborhood and all of the needs of the neighborhood. It is in the worship of the parish community that everything that is said in this book comes to a focal point, for the majority of Catholics worship in the parish church. The renewal, restoration and reform of the sacred liturgy is all directed to make of the parish Mass a worthy and fruitful celebration of the Christian Mysteries.

Although it is yet in its early stages, this renewal, restoration, reform of Catholic public worship is of the greatest importance to the parish. It seeks to make Mass, whenever it is celebrated but especially the Sunday parish Mass, visibly and audibly a glorious symphony: a community in action led by a presiding person; a community assisted and aided, directed and guided, by ministers; a community which expresses itself as a symphonic group, aware of itself as God's gathered people; a community conscious of being so many mouths and voices of Christ praising the Father, crying for mercy, rejoicing in mercy given, willing to be seated and to be still, to be open, when God's Word is proclaimed. Catholics sensitive to this renewal and its purposes are willing to engage themselves actively with the celebrant when in his homily he breaks the bread of the Word of God and makes it workable in today's world. They will be conscious and eager participants in the whole action of the symphony. Particularly will they feel an interior oneness with their priest, and with Christ their high priest in the holy canon, the eucharistic prayer.

The efforts we sum up as "renewal" or "liturgical movement," efforts to bring the Catholic people through their parish Mass to this degree of experience of oneness with each other and oneness with Christ, have



reached a climax in our time, with the coming of the Council. If the labors of the council fathers are to bear the fruit they pray for, each parish must be conscious of itself as responsible for the work of the Council. It must understand itself as an integral part of the Church and realize that papal statements and conciliar decrees are dead letters if they are not reduced to action on all levels. We will discuss this more thoroughly later in this chapter. Meanwhile we want to be aware, during this transition period, as the worship of the parish begins to grow in meaning and participation, of the churchly dimension to these parish efforts.

In addition to the eucharistic celebration, the parish also worships in the celebration of the other sacraments and in its various "devotions" and other services. Here, too, a sense and experience of community are essential. Public worship, for the parish as for the Church as a whole, does not engross or encompass all of the activity of the parish, but it is the goal towards which all activity leads, and it is the source from which all activity gathers its strength.

## Wider Functions

What are some of the other aspects and functions of the parish? The parish is Christ, today, in this location, teaching his saving Word, saving men from their sins and making saints of them. It is certainly true to say that the Church has a teaching job even more extensive than its services of public worship, for its job is saving; the Church's job is making saints.

And who are these potential saints, whom the Church must reach, inspire, educate, and encourage in holiness? Are we to look for them only among the tiny band of parishioners, of "practicing Catholics"? Even among these, we must learn to look at *all* parishioners, adults as well as children, the learned as well as those who approach life in a more simple way. But we cannot restrict our vision to parishioners. We have to look at the total population of our parish territory. In this vast group there are many committed, practicing Protestants and Jews. There are some agnostics, and many who are Catholic or Protestant or Jewish only nominally—and here is a fertile field for converts. Some of these indeed, though

without church ties, have a deep sense of personal vocation and are in search of Christ and his truth.

Briefly, the Church in its work of forming saints has a responsibility to those who immediately own it as Mother, adults as well as children. It also has a responsibility to those who, as Canon Law says, "are entrusted to the pastor in the Lord"—those non-Catholics, unaffiliated with any church group, to whom we can have a direct mission of conversion, and those other non-Catholics, to whom we have not the mission of conversion but the mission of attracting and drawing and cooperating-with toward unity. The parish must teach and form its own. It must convert the uncommitted outsider. And it must be part of the ecumenical movement.

Unfortunately, when we think of the parish Church as teacher, our attention is focused immediately on the school, and often it stops there. The price we have paid for our school system in the United States is that the parish has become almost a child-centered institution. In the frenzy to enroll children, to provide teachers and classrooms for them, to raise money for the educational enterprise, the school becomes the parish, and the Church is but an adjunct. What better illustration could we find of a tail wagging a dog?

Anyone who has been deeply involved in the educational process knows that education does not stop when one is out of school. He knows too that the people most difficult to educate are precisely those not-yet-matured people whom we call children. It might be rash to judge the adage, "Give me a child when he is young, and he is mine for life," as completely false, but it certainly is not completely true, not gospel-true.

Every person in the parish needs to continue to grow. The marvels of the Word, the Christ, are never exhausted. And the parish must be the agency, the normal agency, through which Christ takes ever further and deeper possession of the mind, the heart, the emotions of each person. I am not advocating that every parish develop a complete adult education program. What I am going to suggest is that this teaching function, this formation of the adult parishioner, is best achieved by adequately developed and matured public wor-



ship. Language which speaks to all men—the marvelously imaginative language of Sacred Scripture; action which speaks to all men—the wondrous symbolic action of the sacred liturgy: this is the normal school for the disciples of the Lord.

When we look at the parish as a part of the mission outreach of the Church, we see a need to call parishioners to their responsibility towards their disenfranchised brothers. The parish must form a catechumenate—that is to say, an organic part of the parish which will send laborers into the vineyard, men who will become fishers of their fellows, sharing the things of the spirit. In this catechumenate, there will be men and women (obviously lay-people, if we are to catechize large numbers of people) who will give formal training, in classes, to the potential convert. But, above all, the convert must come to an experience of the parish as a community, where it is most a community, at Mass.

## Ecumenical Work

In this year of grace, in view of the novelty of the Church's involvement in ecumenical activities, it would be rash to attempt to sketch fully the parish's responsibility in this area. We have yet to find out what we must do. We have to think and we have to experiment. All we can do now is voice hopes and offer intentions for prayer. Certainly the parish must constantly pray, as Archbishop Shehan of Baltimore prays in his 1962 pastoral letter on unity, that "Almighty God will forgive and undo the sins we Catholics have committed against unity in our time, and past times, in this diocese and other dioceses." The parish must be no longer a scandal and a stumbling-block to other Christians and to non-Christians in the neighborhood. And at the very least the parish can cooperate and work well with men and women of other and of no faith in solving the social problems of the area. If the parish takes seriously its task of forming saints, it must direct its attention at all persons within the parish limits; adult and child members, unattached and nominal Christians and Jews, and committed, churchd people.

Continuing the work of Christ in the world, the Church not only teaches and saves and makes men holy, the Church

also must give service. It has a ministry to fulfill in loving service to all neighbors, in the spirit of the Good Samaritan and his indiscriminating definition of "neighbor." Do any of us deny that the Church has a role to play in the human city? And if the Church universal has such a role, certainly the parish has it for this concrete community and location. Papal encyclicals have reiterated again and again the necessity of this role, and have offered general guide-lines for its fulfilment. They tell us that what the Christian community brings to the human city is most importantly the love of Christ, not laws or rules or injunctions. A city gorged on material treasures, a city almost stupefied by its own distractions, such a city needs men and women who shine radiantly with the love of Christ our Lord.

The City of Man is confronted by vast and complex problems. Its desire for peace has not brought peace—among men, among families, among the various groups in our communities, among nations. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Above everything else in this temporal mission, the parish must become an unwearied advocate of peace, the source of which can only be Jesus Christ.

Christ in the City of Man—this is the parish. For the parish is a real part of the City of Man. When sociologists examine a city, they find a grouping of persons. They also find a grouping of institutions. The parish itself, in one aspect, is such an institution, or series of institutions. On the national level we are told that after government itself, the churches are the biggest builders. Labor-management policies, hiring and promotion policies of the Church as construction employer—these are institutional ways in which the Church exercises a tremendous influence in the City of Man. If, in letting contracts for construction, Church institutions practice injustice and violate charity, it doesn't much matter whether or not the theological content of the social encyclicals is preached on Sunday. The Church cannot successfully combine a bearing witness to Christ before persons and a bearing witness to the forces of evil before the institutions of society.

But the parish is more than *merely* a part of the City of Men. The parish should be the "soul" of this portion of the human community. The new world being born in



our times is in search of a soul, and the only person who can give a soul to this city is Christ, the glorious Christ in heaven, at work here and now in this parish. When we try to envision the Church in its parochial dimension as the soul of the City of Men, we think of its teaching, we think of its witness. But we find, basically, that it must become the motive power, the source of energy for making the City of Men worthy of the sons and daughters of God.

Justice binds a society together. But a society which observes only justice is not a human community. Love alone transmutes a society into a community. The state, the civil authority, secular institutions—by their very structure—can call forth only the resources of justice. The Church alone has, as its life blood, the love of God for man. Therefore, the parish must be the radiant furnace of charity, lubricating justice and ennobling it.

## Racial Problems

Of all the city's distressing problems, the gravest is that connected with "race"—segregation, discrimination, prejudice. Those observers are profoundly correct who have said that white America will have to have the Negro to hate until white America has solved its problem, and when white America has solved its problem, it will no longer need to hate the Negro, but will be able to reach out to him as brother. What causes this need for white America to hate, or for Germany to exterminate six million Jews, or for the western world to blow itself up in the first and second World Wars and possibly, horribly, in the impending third? Is it not that modern man senses himself as unlovable? He cannot love himself, and since he cannot love himself he cannot love his brother?

How relevant this condition is to the gospel of Jesus! "My Father is your friend." "In this we know God's love, that he has first loved us." If we can take modern man and help him see, with searching clarity, his own despicable failures and faults and sins, and at the same time help him experience the fact that God loves him in his sins, in spite of his sins, because of his sins, beyond his sins, we shall have helped white America to be at peace with itself so that it can turn and look at its brother with

love. But it is important that we help man *experience* this divine love. It is not enough that he learn it from the ears up. It is not enough that the Church should speak mere words. How can the Church effectively proclaim this truth, how can it create the experience of this love? Not by solemn conclaves of cardinals; not by entourages of bishops, monsignori and pastors; but by means of a serious nurture and cleansing and development of its millions of living, loving Christians, at their own hearthstone, the parish Church. Thus it becomes the soul of the City of Man.

The parish stands in relation not only to God, its Father and Master in worship, not only to its neighbors and to the civic community as a ministry of love and service, but also to the universal Church. The parish is a part, an integral and organic part, of the whole Church, the Body of Christ. If the parish is to be truly one with the Church, it must enter into fruitful conversation, dialogue, communication with its sister churches in the diocese and throughout the world. By itself it is small and weak. It stands to receive much from the wide world of the faithful. Nevertheless, since it is so real, so here and now, it can speak for its people and for its separated brothers to the universal Church. One of the inexplicable graces of the modern Church has been the number of recent popes who have possessed extraordinary vision, who have looked at the world with eyes of love, who have diagnosed ills and prescribed remedies. But so prophetic a papacy has been hampered and made ineffective because on a diocesan and parochial level the lament of Pius XI has been justified: "I might just as well write these encyclicals and throw them in the Tiber."

Sensing itself as part of the Church catholic, the parish must be aware of what the bishop is saying to the diocese, of what the national hierarchy is saying to the country. And it must attend with great care to what popes and councils are saying to the whole Church and to the world. Its listening cannot be merely speculative. It must listen with vigor. It must listen with intelligence. It must listen with a willingness to take the message that is given and make it real in this location.

No conversation from Rome to the world, from the bishop to the parish, is a mono-



logue. In a community, in a family, monologues are intolerable. These communications must be true conversations. Just as the parish has a responsibility to listen to the bishop, to the national hierarchy, to the pope and council, so also the parish has a responsibility to speak to its bishop, to its national hierarchy, to the pope and to the council. If it would meet these responsibilities, its members must be conscious that they are in their Father's house. Then we will feel free to speak of our needs, of our conditions, of the real problems which worry and frustrate us, to our fathers in Christ. To the extent that the bishop is counselled and advised by the experience of his parishes—to that extent will the Church be a living, dynamic community.

This responsibility for speaking to the larger Church calls for the same virtue in the parish that it calls for in the individual Christian who would bear a prophetic witness. The word of the parish to the universal Church must be a word of love; it must be a word of patience; it must be a word that is translated into the experiential language of the listener. For example, when a small, chiefly Negro parish cries out for justice to its diocese, it is heard, not by an abstract "diocese," but by the bishop, administrators, curial officials. When its cry of anguish is uttered, it must be uttered in a language which is meaningful.

If Catholic hospital administrators are unjustly running segregated hospitals, the

anguish of the parish is not sufficiently communicated to the bishop by a vocabulary of Aristotelian justice. The parish's word must carry the sense of scandal that is involved. When the parish wishes to speak to the larger Church on the need for cooperation with the city, the human community, the ward or neighborhood, it must find a word which will reach the lay advisors who will undoubtedly be consulted on the diocesan level. Perhaps it is necessary to address them in financial terms, or in political terms. If the parish is to be an effective voice alerting the larger units of Christ's Body, it must speak a language which can be heard and which is intelligible. Bishop Waters, of Raleigh, summed it up beautifully when he said: "If I love you enough, I will speak so you can listen . . . And if you love me enough, you will listen so you can hear."

The parish is the Church universal, here and now. The parish is Christ, worshiping with these people in this place, worshiping the Father in spirit and in truth. The parish is Christ saving and making saints. The parish is Christ administering not only the *law* of his love but his very love to the City of Men in this neighborhood. The parish is Christ speaking to Christ: the large Church speaking to the small Church, the small Church speaking to the large Church. This is not an idealistic portrait of a parish. This is a simple statement of the minimal requirements which a parish must meet if it is to be a functioning organ in the Body of Christ.

*The problem for the conscience of Christians today is not so much that of adding up the number of conversions, but rather of making present the signs of Jesus Christ in the fullest possible truth. "And you, who do you say that I am?"*

P. Babin



# Only God Counts His Converts

Pacificus Kennedy, O.F.M.

Like thousands of other readers, Arthur C. Hughes was horrified by what the local Dallas papers in 1946 called the Stomping Murder. Like the others, too, he never expected to meet the teen-ager who brutally murdered an old lady who befriended him.

But a Catholic woman who knew of Arthur's patience and skill in dealing with young delinquents asked him to visit the youth. The boy already had been twice tried, twice convicted, and was awaiting execution.

Arthur agreed quickly after learning that the boy had said, "They told me I was baptized a Catholic, but I don't know anything about it."

AS SOON AS the condemned youth met Arthur in the Dallas jail, he blurted out, "Can you get my sentence changed to life imprisonment?"

"That's not why I came," Arthur gently replied. "Your lawyer has kept you alive for three years. If anyone can get you a commutation, he can. I came to speak to you about your spiritual welfare."

The youngster became surly. Arthur persevered. "In one way, I envy you. You are one of the most fortunate men who ever lived."

"What do you mean—*fortunate*?" the boy snarled.

"Millions of people have died since the world began. But how many of them knew *when* they were going to die? You know exactly how much time you have left to get in God's friendship."

Buster, as the papers called him, did not seem interested; Arthur felt that he had failed. But two days later (two Masses later) he received a letter the boy had dictated, saying that if someone had taken an interest in him earlier, he would not have

gotten into so much trouble. In the letter, the boy asked to see a priest.

When Buster was moved to the State Penitentiary and placed in Death Row, he became a pupil of Father Edward Braumann, O.M.I., chaplain, who taught him the three R's—reading and 'riting (to keep him occupied) and religion. Arthur was instrumental in getting the boy a stay of execution so he could finish the catechism.

The lad clearly repented. In his final moments, Buster edified everyone by the manner in which he went to the chair—after having received his First Holy Communion. It was Arthur who arranged for the funeral Mass.

IN THE 50 YEARS since he became a Catholic in St. Jo, Texas, at the age of 21, Arthur C. Hughes has made it easier for countless souls to get in touch with the Church—easier than it had been for himself.

Until recently, however, he refused to say much about his apostolate (even while he was being honored publicly for his works of mercy by the Order of the Knights of St. Sylvester; Loyola University of the South, New Orleans; the Notre Dame U. Club of Dallas; the Texas Welfare Association; the National Council of Catholic Youth; Holy Trinity Church, his home parish today; and the National Conference of Christians and Jews).

The way Arthur begins his story, "There were a thousand people in St. Jo, but only two Catholic families.

"Like my parents, three brothers and sisters, I went to the Presbyterian church. I also taught Sunday school—but I could not

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Courtesy of *The Catholic Layman*, The Paulist Fathers, 401 West 59th Street, New York. Issue of July, 1963. A condensation.



answer a pupil who asked, 'Why don't we fast like it says here in the Bible? Why don't we anoint with oil?'

"I overheard my Father conversing with a visiting minister, and I did not know what they meant when they agreed that 'The Catholics have the right idea about the words, This is My Body.'

"So I decided to study all religions. Naturally I started with my own. I was bewildered to learn that the Presbyterian Church did not claim to be the original Church founded by Jesus Christ."

HE WAS 17 when a companion gave him the book *Father Smith Instructs Jackson* by Archbishop Noll. Arthur studied Catholic teaching by himself for the next four years and finally inquired when and where he could speak with a priest. He learned that Father Luke Hess of the Benedictine Monastery at Subiaco, Arkansas, came to St. Jo every six weeks for Mass.

The first time they met, Father Luke questioned Arthur for two hours and then said, "There is no reason why you should not be received into the Church immediately." The ceremony took place in the front parlor of a friend's home. Next morning (July 9, 1913) Father Luke offered Mass in the dining room of this house, using the sideboard as an altar. With just six people present, Arthur received his First Holy Communion.

A friendly Methodist in Alvord got him off to a good start.

"You know Irish MacDonald?" this Methodist asked. "Forty years ago he told me he was a Catholic. Now he's dying. I know you Catholics like to see a priest before you go."

At the first contact, the oldest MacDonald son said to Arthur, "Come to see my father yourself. But no priest!" After several visits, however, the young apostle could see the old man was becoming more anxious for the Sacraments as his condition worsened. Timidly, Arthur said to the oldest son, "Your father really would like to speak with a priest."

Young MacDonald reddened and banged the table with his fist. "The heck with the neighbors!" he shouted. "Get a priest for my father."

A priest came from Montague, some 45 miles away, to administer the Last Rites.

The next day, "Irish" MacDonald died.

THE MAN WHO KEPT Arthur running to priests and to books for seven years looking for answers was a Baptist minister.

"My job required that I get rid of a lot of refrigerators in Fort Worth," recalls Arthur, "so I asked B. G. Powell to write some ads for me; I had heard he was good. I knew he preached in a Baptist church on Sundays and Wednesdays. But he didn't learn of my religion until the time he came to my home when I was ill and saw a rosary hanging on the bedpost. From then on, he was out to save me from Rome!

"For example, he asked me to take him to a parish mission. I guessed that he just wanted to get something to criticize! But the Jesuit Father spoke only of the love of God, and who could object to that?

"Powell bombarded me with questions. This made me resolve to study 100 additional questions and answers every week. I'd clip them out of Catholic weeklies and magazines. I'd study them, file them, index them. After finding the answers to Mr. Powell's questions, I'd never argue with him or show anger, because he was sincere, even if misinformed."

The inquirer finally reached his last obstacle to accepting the Faith; he belonged to an organization forbidden to Catholics.

"I'd only be spinning my wheels," Arthur told Mr. Powell, "if I talked about that organization—you know their secrets and I don't. But just as you can't be a Baptist and a Methodist at one and the same time, you can't belong to the Catholic Church and this other organization at one and the same time. You'll have to give up something. Now wouldn't it be foolish to pass up what you believe to be the one true Church when your eternal salvation is at stake?"

The catechist felt handsomely rewarded for his seven years of prayer and study when Mr. Powell entered the Church, followed by his wife and children.

"He sure got me an education!" Arthur says. "He prepared me to deal with other converts and reverts. I never did count how many. The Good Shepherd does that; it's His work and His doing.

"There were several Protestant ministers I was able to help a little. A few boys I instructed are now priests—one is a bishop.

"It took 14 years to find a solution to one



marriage case. But, as a result of persevering efforts, all members of three different families received the Sacraments.

AT ONE TIME, when Arthur was selling phonographs in Fort Worth, he wanted to help a Catholic man who had attempted marriage outside the Church with a non-Catholic woman. But how to speak to the lady without alarming her?

He went to her home, rang the doorbell and asked for permission to demonstrate a phonograph. As she started to close the door, he said, "Please, lady! Just listen to one record. I'll let you hear Caruso. It won't cost anything." Reluctantly she admitted him, and let him set up his portable, hand-wind machine.

Arthur had a rosary hanging half-way out of his coat-pocket; just as an aria ended, the rosary fell to the floor.

"Oh, are you a Catholic?" the woman asked.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Would you mind telling me something?"

"I'll try, ma'am."

The lady then explained that she could not understand why her Catholic husband wanted her to see a priest about validating the marriage, since she considered herself married for life. Arthur told her about the seven Sacraments, explaining that a Catholic involved in an invalid union deprives himself of Confession, Communion and even Christian burial.

"Protestants claim that one church is as good as another," he concluded. "So you have nothing to lose, and your husband has everything to re-gain, if you permit the Catholic ceremony."

"He didn't tell me all that," she said.

"A priest could tell you far more. Wouldn't you like to talk with Monsignor Nolan at St. Patrick's?"

"All right. But I don't want my husband to know."

"Don't worry about him. I can drive you to and from St. Pat's while your husband is at work."

Not long after, Arthur knelt at the altar rail with the couple, now validly married; all three received Communion.

As soon as Arthur heard that Otto Peters was sick, he went to see him, and wasted no time getting down to serious talk. Otto

had frequently questioned him about the Church.

"Sure I'd like to be a Catholic," Otto answered Arthur's direct question. "But I know so many good-for-nothing Catholics that I'm disgusted."

"If you were to die this minute, would Our Lord ask you about *them*?"

"No. I guess he would ask me about *me*. But I have lived so long without Him, I guess He will manage to get along without me. I don't like to sneak in free at the last minute."

"Well, here's what it's like," said Arthur. "It's like a boy who wants to see the circus. If he can't afford to pay his way in, then he had better slip in under the tent."

That tickled Otto. Sick as he was, he could not help laughing. "Phone for the priest," he said.

That night he was baptized; next morning he received First Communion; and a few hours later, still chuckling about that boy slipping under the tent, he died. It was Christmas Eve.

In Arthur's 50 years as an apostle, convert work has gone hand-in-hand with youth work. "Converts often ask you to speak to their children. A boy brings his pals around."

Arthur has given many boys a home, without legal adoption; has helped many through Boystown, Jesuit and Benedictine high schools; through Notre Dame U. and the University of Dallas. He established a Foundation in 1950, which so far has assisted more than 70 boys and girls to get an education.

Arthur has lectured seminarians in San Antonio, Tex., and Subiaco, Ark., on convert-making; has addressed numerous parish congregations (even in Protestant churches); has spoken at innumerable Communion breakfasts, CCD conventions and K of C meetings; has helped civic and student groups solve teen-age problems.

All who know him agree with the phrasing of a Citation awarded him early this year, in which the National Conference of Christians and Jews lauded Arthur C. Hughes for "his dedication to the principles and ideals of the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God; for his devotion to his Church; for his humanitarian service and his outstanding contribution to better understanding among all people."



# Books Received

The Signs of the  
New Covenant  
Aime Georges Martimort  
*The Liturgical Press. \$4.75*

This book represents a timely and distinguished contribution to the catechetical revival. Many will find it one of the most complete and satisfying of those books that attempt to treat the sacraments in a single volume.

It grew out of a request from the French Christian Brothers who were concerned to provide a course in the sacraments for their junior religious. They looked for a text that would serve both their own spiritual formation and their professional competence as teachers of Christian Doctrine.

Father Martimort consented to undertake this assignment. A member of the Theological Faculty at Toulouse and Director of the French Pastoral Liturgical Center, he brought both deep learning and wide practical experience to his task. He was aided by a committee of scholars and pastors who collaborated closely with him. Every effort was made to incorporate the doctrinal, biblical, liturgical and patristic advances of recent years—with a weather eye on the best teaching methods.

Wisely, the publishers were not content merely to provide an accurate, readable translation. The book manifests certain revisions, especially with regard to collateral reading, which point to the rich sources originally written in English and easily accessible to English-speaking readers. The finished volume represents a book that is in the best tradition of the "new" catechetics—one that has utilized all our resources to the full.

Catechists will be grateful to the author and publisher of this excellent book for its many distinct merits. This reviewer is particularly thankful to see in one place, and in their proper order, the mounting insights on phases of the sacraments that

have been stressed in the last decade. Often the catechist finds himself in the somewhat frustrating position of having to make a tentative synthesis based merely on his own personal reading. Of course, no book will ever substitute for the teacher who makes each lesson a personal possession. However, the catechist can now start with a text on the sacrament that includes *all* the relevant material, wisely *organized*, and presented in such a way as to give each part its proper degree of *emphasis*.

Beyond The Commandments  
James J. Killgallon  
Gerard P. Weber  
*Herder and Herder. \$3.95*

That enterprising writing team, Fathers Killgallon and Weber, has produced another book that will prove to be extremely helpful to a wide variety of readers. It is no criticism of the book to say that it does not carry the impact that their volume *Life in Christ* did a few years ago. Nevertheless it will have its own considerable value. Those who enjoyed the writers' pioneer catechism for adults will not be disappointed in this, their latest book.

In ten clear, sprightly chapters they discuss the religious life of American Catholics. And they enjoy exceptional opportunities to observe and comment on the strength and weaknesses of Catholicism in our land. Their writings and lectures grow out of their deep involvement in the current Catholic revival, and manifest an assimilation of the best results of Catholic scholarship. They are at home with the latest in scripture, liturgy, and religious education.

But their learning is never merely theoretical. They have been stationed for years in busy Chicago parishes and always relate their studies to immediate and pressing pastoral concerns. Behind every line



they write are hours spent with married couples in Cana conferences or adult Catholics and non-Catholics in inquiry classes, or in efforts to improve race relations.

It is commonplace to charge contemporary practice of Catholicism with being legalistic, superficial and lacking in responsibility—nor does this book avoid making these accusations. It's merit is to point out precisely how—in the context of American life—a Catholic can acquire a greater measure of genuine spirituality, depth and Christian maturity. With this goal in view, the writers discuss matters like Christian morality, prayer, faith, sex and the role of the laity.

They do not profess to give a full dress treatment of a spirituality for the layman. But they do discuss some of the more fundamental elements in the problem and point out the directions in which improvement is to be sought. A few years ago, this reviewer sympathized with a speaker who was asked to recommend a good, popular, recent book on lay spirituality for a married, American Catholic. *Beyond the Commandments*, if not the last word on the subject, is an excellent introduction.

#### Council Speeches of Vatican II

Edited by Hans Küng, Yves Congar, O.P.; Daniel O'Hanlon, S.J.

*Deus Book. The Paulist Press.*

This excellently printed, inexpensive, handy volume brings us fifty-five of the more significant speeches delivered by the Catholic bishops at the Second session of the Vatican Council. These addresses were selected by a trio of distinguished Catholic theologians by reason of their basic agreement with the spirit and program for the Council enunciated by Paul VI.

These extraordinary papers are divided into four parts corresponding to the four objectives of the Council formulated by Pope Paul himself: self-awareness of the Church, renewal, reunion of Christians and dialogue with the world. Each of the four sections begins with a selection from the Pope's opening discourse for the Second Session, which sets the stage for remarks of the individual bishops.

Since only a small fraction of this invaluable material was publicized either in the secular or Catholic press, both editors and

publishers have performed a signal service in making it generally available. It was certainly not the primary intention of the speakers to be oratorical or dramatic, yet it is a profoundly moving experience to read their diagnosis of the spiritual ills of the world. And they are courageously forthright in giving their opinions as to how the Church might better fulfill her total obligation in our day.

God gave to the Church two truly great popes whose names will be forever linked to the work of the Second Vatican Council. But a reading of these speeches will reveal how richly He blessed the Church in these awesome times with so worthy an episcopate. The bishops, on every page, manifest their unusual awareness of the aspirations of modern man, constructive dedication to Christ's interests, and moving sincerity. The ancient Christian capitals along with the struggling new nations are equally well represented. And no major doctrinal, ecumenical or pastoral issue is neglected.

## GUIDE

- A publication of the Paulist Institute for Religious Research.
- Officers: John J. Keating, C.S.P., Director. George C. Hagmaier, C.S.P., Associate Director. Editor of *Guide*, John T. McGinn, C.S.P.
- Concerned with the theoretical and practical aspects of the Apostolate to non-Catholics.
- Published 10 times a year (monthly except for combined issues of June-July and in August-September).
- Annual subscription \$1.00. Single issue 10¢. Bulk lots to seminarians at 5¢ a copy.

## GUIDE

411 West 59th Street  
New York 19, New York



# Guide Lights

## SURVEY ON A SLUMP . . .

Over the past few years we have experienced a decrease in converts to the Church in America. This same slump has also occurred in Great Britain. Father Francis Ripley, director of the Catholic Information Center in Liverpool, undertook to discover the reasons by means of a survey. As a result of it, he came to the conclusion that it is a by-product of the Vatican Council and other Christian reunion moves.

Father Ripley disclosed that 312 respondents listed about a thousand reasons for the decline. About half of the replies mentioned the Vatican Council and a growing attitude towards non-Catholics which, it is thought, persuades non-Catholics that one Church is as good as another and Catholics are beginning to agree with this view.

We find this survey questionable. In terms of percentages, 312 respondents represent something like .006 of the Catholic population, if Northern Ireland is included. What is more important, however, than the size of the sampling is the quality. Are these 312 people who answered a questionnaire published in Britain's Catholic newspapers competent and careful observers? Have they made any real study in the matter? Or have they too readily fastened upon a fact which happens to coexist with a falling-off in conversions and pronounced that fact a cause?

Some years ago, when the Russians were engaged in an extensive series of atom tests, there happened to be a spell of miserable weather in parts of the United States. A number of people concluded that it must have been caused by the testing. Some of our own scientists labeled this as nonsense, but they did not shake the simple logic of many who continued to assert that, since the bad weather occurred at the time of the testing, the testing must be the cause.

## COMPLICATED QUESTION . . .

This whole question of the relationship of ecumenism and conversion, in all of its ramifications, including the effect of one upon the other, is too complex to admit of a ready answer. There ought to be a series of extensive studies among both clergy and laity. One study, for example, might be con-

cerned with those members of the clergy who, over a period of time, have manifested interest and zeal in the work of conversion. What is their present attitude towards ecumenism and how does it affect their present feeling towards convert work and their activity in it?

Our own speculation, based on some study of statistics and a fair measure of circulation among convert-minded clergy, is that ecumenism has contributed in a minor way at best to the drop in conversions. A few priests who were active in convert work have begun to direct some of their energies into the ecumenical field, but there is no evidence that their new interest has substantially impaired the number of converts in their area.

If we are looking for reasons, we might be advised not to pass over the growing materialism of modern life. It is so widespread and so subverting that it has blunted the spiritual aspirations of man. Even in the years of the religious boom, when all churches were making converts, there were grounds for suspecting that religion was being sought by many not for itself but because it fitted into a value system which was basically material.

## SECULARIZING INFLUENCE . . .

Writing on this in 1959, Will Herberg exposed the paradox of the strengthening of the religious structure in spite of increasing secularization. "The answer," he stated, "is that for increasing numbers of Americans religion serves as a function largely unrelated to the content of faith, the function of defining their identity and providing them with a context of belonging in the great wilderness of a mobile American society. Indeed, for such a purpose, the authentic content of faith may even prove a serious handicap . . . For this reason, the typical American has developed a remarkable capacity for being serious about religion without taking religion seriously . . . His ideas, values, and standards he takes from what is so often really his ultimate commitment, the American Way of Life."

The boom was most noticeable in suburbia. Perhaps the tapering off is related to the slowing down of the flight to the suburbs. At any rate, assessed in terms of



church growth, religion no longer seems quite so important. And we might suppose that it would become less so, if some startling development did not turn men's minds to it as a transcendental value. We believe that this is what ecumenism can effect and is effecting. And, if this be true, then rather than leading to a decrease in conversions, it ought to lead men to the Church, even though its own end is not conversion but corporate reunion.

### THE LITURGICAL APOSTOLATE . . .

Ecumenism on the part of the Catholic Church involves, in large measure, an updating of the Church, and in this process of *aggiornamento*, the liturgy must necessarily be prominent. On this point, Archbishop Hallinan stated, "The liturgy cannot do it all, but it can do much. Doctrine can become, in the popular mind, abstract and irrelevant. Moral principles can become enmeshed in the mores of a confused society. But the liturgy is the daily meeting place of God and man in a manner that even the bland Catholic can hardly ignore. This is because liturgy is the public worship of the Church."

The passage of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy by almost the entire bloc of bishops indicated like sentiments. And the swift action of the American bishops moving to implement the constitution does credit to their liturgical awareness. They announced almost immediately that they had "formally agreed to make full use of the vernacular concessions made by the council." At this writing the first report of their definitive action has just come in.

Archbishop Dearden announced in Washington: "The assembled cardinals, archbishops and bishops of the United States, in their first general meeting on the Liturgy Constitution of the Vatican Council, discussed today programs on the use of English in the Mass, sacraments, and breviary. They also discussed English texts to be used. These discussions will now be submitted to the Commission on the Liturgy in Rome for final approval. When this is forthcoming they will be put into effect in the United States as soon as possible."

### NOTABLE CONVERSION . . .

The ecumenical significance of liturgical improvement is underlined, strangely enough, by a recent conversion, the conversion of a Lutheran campus minister at Western Reserve University. Larry Sather became a Catholic after finding out that the Catholic Church today, in his opinion,

is achieving many of the legitimate goals that Martin Luther himself sought four centuries ago. The factors he cited specifically were the flowering of the liturgical movement in the new constitution and the reawakening respect for Holy Scripture as God talking to men.

He said that the involvement of the entire Christian community in the Church's official prayer and sacrifice, stressed in the liturgical movement, was one of Luther's aspirations. So also was the council's insistence on scripturally oriented preaching. He claimed that in becoming a Catholic he was not abandoning the authentic values of his own religious tradition, but rather rediscovering them. But it took the Vatican Council to make some discoveries first and illuminate them in a solemn way for the world.

### POPE PAUL . . .

The Holy Father has ceaselessly demonstrated his interest in the cause of Christian unity since he first took office. He referred to it again in his Easter Sermon at a Mass he celebrated at St. John Lateran. He termed the Eucharist "the mystery of reunification" and "the font of brotherhood." He told his listeners that Holy Communion "affords us an ineffable coming together with Christ and through Him with God and brothers." Carrying out this theme, he turned his sermon into a greeting to "all Christian brethren who are unfortunately still separated from us but who are engaged in seeking the unity desired by Christ for His only Church." He especially mentioned Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras as a recipient for his Easter greeting.

This venerable Orthodox leader was recently interviewed by Gary MacEoin for an article published in *Sign*. The Patriarch told him, "I am a dreamer. Last night I saw Pope Paul while I slept, and the two of us were discussing how to take the next step in our joint enterprise." He added, almost harshly, "It is not enough to be a dreamer. I am also a realist. We have to work to make our dreams come true, work untiringly, and with faith."

Visitors to Rome report that the Pope was profoundly moved by the coming of five hundred "ecumenical pilgrims" drawn from the major Christian bodies. They journeyed in three groups, from Australia, Netherlands, England, Belgium and France. "We receive you," said the Pope, "with esteem and sincere respect for your respective beliefs and opinions."

JOHN J. KEATING, C.S.P.



## ***Index and Back Issues***

COLLECTOR'S ITEM SELLING OUT! A number of complete issues of *Techniques for Convert Makers*, Volume 3, together with an index are available for binding. This paper has given way to *Guide* and is no longer being published. \$2.00 a set. **BACK ISSUES OF GUIDE!** All the issues of Volumes 4 and 5 of *Guide* are available with an index and ready for binding. Each volume at \$2.00.



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Ecumenism in its modern form has evoked a favorable response wherever Christians dwell and are conscious of the sin of disunity. Yet, it took its root early in Europe which is now dotted with ecumenical centers. Places like Chevetogne in Belgium, where the quarterly *Irenikon* is published. Places like Geneva, the home of the World Council of Churches. Places like Taizé, a monastery of Protestant monks dedicated to the cause of unity. Places like Rome, where the second Vatican Council is being held and where men of all faiths are gathered to observe and report.

In these and other centers of ecumenical interest there is much that can be learned. It is for this reason that the Paulist Institute has arranged with Air France to conduct a study tour in Europe for priests and ministers. It will leave from New York City on July 21, 1964, and make its first stop in Paris. From there the tour will go through Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and finally arrive in Rome. At each center it visits competent men will explain the history and the hopes of the establishment. Part of the tour will be by motor coach and by boat down the Rhine. The longer portions will be by plane. All accommodations will be in first class hotels.

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